

# WORLD AGRICULTURAL WEATHER HIGHLIGHTS

January 11, 2001

## **1 - UNITED STATES**

In December, heavy snow and gusty winds frequently accompanied cold weather in the northern Plains and Midwest, stressing livestock and hampering rural transportation. Major winter storms struck the South just 2 weeks apart, causing electrical and travel disruptions due to heavy snow and ice accumulations. As the cold weather regime deepened, temperatures fell below 32 degrees F in Florida's northern citrus areas on December 20 and 31. More significant freezes reached all but southeastern Florida on January 1 and 5, adversely affecting some citrus fruits and winter vegetables as far south as the Everglades. Cold weather allowed winter wheat to remain dormant or enter dormancy throughout the Plains, Midwest, and Northwest. An extensive snow cover insulated most of the winter wheat crop from harsh conditions. Meanwhile, cool, damp weather slowed or halted winter grain development across the South. In contrast, mild weather prevailed in California and the Southwest, where dry weather stressed some pastures and winter grains. Unusually dry weather also brought renewed drought concerns to the Southeast.

## **2 - SOUTH AMERICA**

In central and northern Argentina, near- to above-normal December rainfall provided adequate soil moisture for vegetative corn and sunflowers and germinating soybeans. In La Pampa and western Buenos Aires, however, a drying trend along with hot weather in early January stressed vegetative summer crops. In southern Brazil, widespread December rainfall maintained adequate to abundant soil moisture for germinating to vegetative soybeans.

## **3 - EUROPE**

During December, near- to above-normal precipitation maintained moisture supplies, except in extreme southeastern Europe, where drought persisted. In the western Iberian peninsula, frequent rainfall delayed winter wheat and barley planting and caused localized flooding. Unseasonably mild weather throughout Europe slowed cold hardening of winter grains and oilseeds. Nevertheless, crops entered dormancy in central and eastern Europe by month's end, with only slow growth continuing in parts of western Europe.



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## **4 - FSU-WESTERN**

In December, overwintering conditions for dormant winter grains were mostly favorable in Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, and the Baltics. Snow cover increased in northern Russia, while major winter wheat producing areas in Ukraine and southern Russia remained snow free.

## **5 - NORTHWESTERN AFRICA**

In December, winter grain planting continued throughout the region. In Morocco, above-normal precipitation in late December eased long-term dryness, improving prospects for winter grain emergence and early growth. Farther east, western Algeria and Tunisia received well-below-normal rainfall, limiting moisture for newly-emerged crops.

## **6 - MIDDLE EAST AND TURKEY**

Since late December, stormy weather in the eastern Mediterranean has increased moisture reserves from southern Turkey to Israel, but caused localized flooding. Unseasonable warmth in early January eroded protective snow cover for winter wheat in sections of Turkey and Iran.

## **7 - SOUTH ASIA**

During December, two tropical cyclones brought locally heavy rain to India's southernmost rice areas. In Pakistan and north-central India, scattered showers benefited winter grains and oilseeds.

## **8 - EASTERN ASIA**

During December, near- to above-normal precipitation fell across the Sichuan Basin eastward along the Yangtze Valley, boosting moisture supplies for winter crops. Seasonably light precipitation fell across the North China Plain, where winter wheat remained dormant. An early-January winter storm brought additional moisture to the North China Plain and Yangtze Valley.

## **9 - SOUTHEAST ASIA**

Monsoon showers brought above-normal December rainfall to the Philippines and the southern half of Vietnam, causing flooding. Seasonably drier weather favored fieldwork in Thailand. Above-normal rainfall in western peninsular Malaysia favored oil palm, while below-normal rainfall in Java, Indonesia reduced moisture for main-season rice.

## **10 - AUSTRALIA**

In December, dry, warm weather aided winter crop harvesting and allowed further flood recovery in New South Wales. Conditions were generally favorable in the east for sorghum, cotton, and sugarcane development.

## **11 - SOUTH AFRICA**

During December, conditions remained favorable for germination and establishment of corn and other summer crops, although sugarcane areas of KwaZulu-Natal experienced additional periodic flooding. In early January, a developing heat wave in the corn belt raised concern for vegetative summer crops.